



## Information Letter



FOR N. C. A. MEMBERS

No. 308

Washington, D. C.

June 1, 1929

## CONTENTS

	Page		Page
Labeling bill favorably reported in Senate	1517	South Africa to have food, drug and disinfectant act	1520
House passes tariff bill	1517	Farm wages compare favorably with industrial rates	1524
Federal department disapproves water bath for non-acid foods	1518	Swiss canned milk output higher	1524
Ten per cent increase indicated in canning tomato acreage	1518	New York canners consider standards for cannery apples	1524
Suspends proposed change in can rating	1519	Mexico issues decree exempting fish products from taxes	1525
Truck crop markets	1519	Florida canned grapefruit pack	1525
Canned milk production and stocks	1521	Bills to indemnify fruit growers introduced	1525
Business conditions	1521	Farming season delayed by freakish weather	1526
Imports of tomato products in April	1521	Weather conditions	1526
Wholesale grocery trade in April	1522	Shipment of Cuban and Bermuda vegetables	1527
Mediterranean fruit fly quarantine amended	1522	Attitude of food law officials on "Health Foods"	1527
Hearing on further extension of fruit fly quarantine	1523		

## Labeling Bill Favorably Reported in Senate

The McNary bill (S. 1133) to require informative labeling of canned foods of inferior quality is now on the Senate calendar, having been favorably reported by the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry after a hearing on May 28. The McNary bill is identical with the Mapes bill (H. R. 730), which is on the House calendar.

## House Passes Tariff Bill

The tariff bill (H. R. 2667) was passed by the House on May 28 after the adoption of a number of amendments proposed by the Ways and Means Committee.

In the bill introduced in the House the rate on prepared and preserved tomatoes was fixed at 25 per cent. As amended by the House the rate is 40 per cent. In other words, the present rate on tomato paste is retained and the rate on canned tomatoes is increased from 25 per cent to 40 per cent.

The House also increased the rate on prepared and preserved figs from 35 per cent to 40 per ad valorem.

On other canned products the House made no changes in the bill as introduced. These rates were summarized in the Information Letter for May 11.

The bill goes to the senate, where the Senate Committee on Finance will hold hearings. Apparently it has not been determined how extensive these hearings will be, but it is not

anticipated that final action will be taken on the tariff bill until sometime in the fall.

#### **Federal Department Disapproves Water Bath for Non-Acid Foods**

Recommendations by the U. S. Department of Agriculture will hereafter make clear and emphatic that non-acid foods should be sterilized under pressure with approved time and temperature, according to a statement sent to bureau chiefs of the Department by Dr. A. F. Woods, Director of Scientific Work in the Department. The statement was issued by Dr. Woods after a conference with the Secretary of Agriculture, and expresses the Department's attitude on this subject. The statement in full follows:

"Research and practical experience have demonstrated that non-acid food products, like asparagus, beans, corn, peas, beets, spinach, meats and fish cannot be safely canned by processing in boiling water, but must be sterilized under pressure with approved time and temperature.

"Pressure cookers are now standard equipment and are readily available at small cost. The Department does not recommend any particular make, although it is important that the pressure kettle be equipped with thermometer and pressure gauge for proper control.

"There is now no excuse for continuing to take risks involved in canning non-acid foods without adequate pressure cooks.

"All recommendations by this Department will hereafter make this clear and emphatic."

Dr. Woods addressed the Board of Directors of the National Canners Association at their meeting in Washington on May 23, and at that time stated that it is the Department's desire to get to home canners the necessity of using such processes as will eliminate the dangers from under-sterilization.

Government and state bulletins on home canning have not heretofore specifically disapproved water bath processes for non-acid products. The attitude now taken by the Federal Department of Agriculture should greatly reduce the danger from under-sterilization of home-canned foods.

#### **Ten Per Cent Increase Indicated in Canning Tomato Acreage**

That the 1929 acreage of tomatoes for manufacture will be 10 per cent greater than the 1928 acreage is indicated by a report just issued by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. The following table shows the final acreage in 1928, the percentage

of change planned for this year, and the intended acreage for 1929, computed from this percentage:

State	1928 Final Acreage Acres	Per cent in 1929 compared with last year Per cent	Intended 1929 Acreage Acres
Arkansas .....	19,600	108	21,170
California .....	25,790	123	31,680
Colorado .....	1,600	118	1,880
Delaware .....	18,500	116	21,460
Illinois .....	3,150	111	3,490
Indiana .....	49,870	117	58,350
Iowa .....	4,810	107	5,150
Kentucky .....	5,500	123	6,760
Maryland .....	22,710	105	23,840
Michigan .....	1,660	115	1,910
Missouri .....	18,700	104	19,450
New Jersey .....	33,000	99	32,670
New York .....	11,170	100	11,840
Ohio .....	10,400	119	12,380
Pennsylvania .....	3,600	108	3,890
Tennessee .....	10,220	91	9,300
Utah .....	5,650	117	6,610
Virginia .....	8,000	109	8,540
Other States .....	4,070	96	3,910
Total .....	232,980	110	279,690
a Revised .....			

### Suspends Proposed Change in Can Rating

By an order entered on May 23 the Interstate Commerce Commission suspended from May 25, 1929, to December 25, 1929, the operation of certain schedules proposing to increase the Official Classification rating on carload shipments of empty cans and tin boxes from fourth class to Rule 26, also minimum weight on steel shipping barrels or drums from 13,000 pounds to 14,000 pounds.

A hearing in this proceeding will be held June 28 at the Commission's office in Washington before Examiner Trezise.

### Truck Crop Markets

Combined forwardings of 29 fruits and vegetables decreased slightly to 18,250 cars during the week ended May 25, and were 1,500 lighter than during the same period last season, according to the U. S. Market News Service.

The commercial peach crop in Georgia will be very light. Early estimates are for slightly less than 10,000 cars this season, compared with shipments of nearly 16,000 last year and approximately 12,000 cars in 1927. About 20 cars of early varieties rolled from Georgia the past week and the first car was reported in California. South Carolina expects one-fourth to one-third fewer peaches than in 1928, while the crop in North Carolina will be slightly below last year's figure.

Efforts were being made in central Mississippi to hold back tomatoes until a better stage of maturity was reached.

However, the first 60 cars of the season moved during the past week. Southern Texas' forwardings increased to 560 cars, while Florida dropped to 215. The Mexican import season is about done. Total domestic shipments were 850 cars, and about 110 arrived from Mexico. Mississippi expects to ship more cars than last year, even from a lighter acreage. The crop in that State is forecast at 1,717,000 bushels, compared with 1,344,000 last season. Eastern Texas expects only a small increase, or a crop of 1,154,000 bushels.

Strawberry shipments decreased temporarily to 2,365 cars for the week. The season was waning in Arkansas and Tennessee, and was near the finish in the Norfolk section and Eastern Shore districts of Virginia. Increases in carlot movement were reported for Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky and Missouri. The strawberry crop in five late States is forecast at about 52,000,000 quarts, compared with 48,400,000 last season. Most of the increase is in New York and Ohio. First cars are now moving from the 16,000,000-quart crop in Washington.

Of the week's 1,100 cars of cabbage, about 580 came from Virginia, 350 from Mississippi and 65 from Tennessee. Mississippi stock was having a wide distribution, with some shipments destined to Canada.

A heavy crop of cucumbers is expected in four early States—about 1,500,000 hampers, or 50 per cent more than in 1928. All sections show sharp gains. Alabama may have 584,000 hampers, South Carolina 566,000, Louisiana 274,000, and Georgia 90,000. Indicated yields per acre are much higher than last season, and condition of the crop in seven leading States is 13 points above that of a year ago.

## CARLOT SHIPMENTS

Commodity	May 19-25 1929	May 12-18 1929	May 20-26 1928	Total this season to May 25	Total last season to May 26	Total last season
Apples, total .....	321	335	402	126,606	92,004	93,094
Eastern states .....	177	174	109	62,195	44,162	44,413
Western states .....	144	161	293	64,411	47,842	48,679
Asparagus .....	66	68	72	1,846	2,607	2,878
Cabbage .....	1,101	1,149	1,037	17,898	13,457	28,487
Carrots .....	382	276	272	7,144	4,164	7,481
Cauliflower .....	105	195	51	9,796	8,991	9,646
Cucumbers .....	355	486	369	8,275	1,581	7,468
Green peas .....	250	346	385	2,648	2,529	4,688
Mixed vegetables:						
Domestic .....	719	839	921	16,324	17,365	33,370
Imports .....	9	10	3	193	469	613
Peaches .....	19	6	4	25	7	57,898
Peppers:						
Domestic .....	151	102	66	1,583	1,756	3,569
Imports .....	5	9	3	556	742	743
Spinach .....	41	84	89	9,611	10,000	10,591
String beans .....	387	554	300	5,181	3,693	6,707
Strawberries .....	2,388	2,476	2,623	15,303	11,531	15,715
Tomatoes:						
Domestic .....	848	844	1,205	9,182	8,680	30,358
Imports .....	110	244	47	6,905	3,408	5,530

### Business Conditions

Commercial transactions during the week ended May 25, as reflected by check payments, were higher than in either the preceding week or the corresponding period of 1928, according to the weekly statement of the Department of Commerce. The primary distribution of goods, as reflected by loadings of freight cars covering the latest reported week, was substantially higher than a year ago.

The general index of wholesale prices was unchanged from the preceding week but was about 4 per cent lower than a year ago. Interest rates on call loans averaged much lower than in the previous week but were higher than a year ago. Time money rates averaged higher than in either period.

#### CAR LOADINGS

	Total	Miscellaneous	Merchandise L. C. L.	Other
Week ended May 18 .....	1,046,179	407,081	262,178	376,920
Preceding week .....	1,047,922	408,000	264,028	375,904
Corresponding week, 1928 .....	1,003,388	394,479	261,449	347,560
Corresponding week, 1927 .....	1,027,498	392,897	261,086	372,915

### Canned Milk Production and Stocks

Stocks of condensed and evaporated milk in the hands of manufacturers on May 1 amounted to 150,725,041 pounds. This amount is about 16,000,000 pounds heavier than a year earlier, and is the heaviest reserve stock reported for May 1 since 1920, when the effects of the war and European relief was still seen. The increase, however, from April 1 was only about 23,000,000 pounds, as compared with the average increase for the last five years, for April, of about 20,000,000 pounds. In view of the heavy production reported for April, the increase in stocks may be regarded as moderate, and as indicating satisfactory movement into trade.

April production was reported as about 9 per cent heavier than a year ago, with increases shown on all classes of goods, except evaporated bulk goods, which represents but a small percentage of the total reported stocks. The April increase was sufficient to bring the total for the year to date about 2 per cent above last year. The increase falls in line with the general increase seen in other manufactured dairy products, butter, for example, showing an increase of 8 per cent over the previous year.

### Imports of Tomato Products in April

Imports of canned tomatoes and tomato paste in April were practically double those of the same month last year. For

the four months of 1929 they were 9,000,000 pounds greater than during the corresponding period of last year, while tomato paste imports were about 388,000 pounds less. The statistics for the first four months of the two years follow:

	Canned Tomatoes		Tomato Paste	
	Pounds	Value	Pounds	Value
1928				
January .....	12,050,694	\$666,403	2,818,596	\$219,000
February .....	7,909,498	446,298	583,266	56,268
March .....	4,849,166	243,038	384,272	42,163
April .....	4,178,502	265,842	435,923	43,631
Total .....	28,487,860	1,621,583	3,722,057	361,061
1929				
January .....	11,584,855	691,913	858,689	117,092
February .....	10,076,274	605,850	831,929	116,933
March .....	8,932,128	325,138	775,096	112,361
April .....	7,314,469	448,300	866,977	136,149
Total .....	37,901,666	2,271,201	3,333,591	482,435

### Wholesale Grocery Trade in April

Volume of wholesale distribution was 5 per cent smaller in April than during the previous month, this decrease being less than is usual at this season. Decreases from the month before were shown for sales in five of the lines of trade reporting monthly sales to the Federal reserve system, while grocery and hardware sales were larger than in March, and sales of drugs showed no change.

As compared with the corresponding month a year ago sales of reporting firms were 9 per cent larger, the increase in volume being general for all lines of trade.

Changes in sales and stocks of wholesale grocery firms in April as compared with March, 1929, and April, 1928, are shown in the following table, decreases being indicated by a minus sign:

Districts	Sales: April, 1929, compared with—		Stocks: April, 1929, compared with—	
	March, 1929 Per cent.	April, 1928 Per cent.	March, 1929 Per cent.	April, 1928 Per cent.
United States .....	2.2	3.4	— 4.8	— 0.1
Boston .....	3.0	— 2.1	...	...
New York .....	4.5	3.9	3.8	—10.7
Philadelphia .....	0.8	7.5	0.8	4.4
Cleveland .....	1.5	4.3	— 4.6	— 1.7
Richmond .....	— 6.5	— 3.0	— 2.1	— 2.5
Atlanta .....	— 2.2	6.4	— 4.3	— 5.8
Chicago .....	3.3	3.9	— 6.4	— 1.1
St. Louis .....	— 4.9	— 3.9	—19.9	—19.6
Minneapolis .....	5.0	4.0	— 5.0	— 2.0
Kansas City .....	— 6.0	— 3.4	— 7.4	— 9.9
Dallas .....	2.0	0.0	— 2.7	4.7
San Francisco .....	4.1	9.6	— 1.6	5.0

### Mediterranean Fruit Fly Quarantine Amended

Two administrative amendments to the Mediterranean fruit fly quarantine have been promulgated by the the Secretary of Agriculture effective May 23. One of these provides for move-



ment interstate of foreign fruits and vegetables entering the United States through Florida ports. The other extends the time for the shipment interstate of non-citrus fruits and host vegetables from protective zones in Florida up to and including June 15, with special provision for shipping grapes up to June 30, 1929.

The provision for entry of foreign fruits and vegetables, chiefly bananas, at Florida ports, the Department of Agriculture points out, is to correct an interpretation of the quarantine as prohibiting movement of all fruits out of the State except in accordance with certain restrictions as to destination and date. These restrictions were intended to apply only to fruit of Florida production.

#### **Hearing on Further Extension of Fruit Fly Quarantine**

A public hearing to consider the advisability of extending the Mediterranean fruit fly quarantine to cover each and every State of the United States is being held in Washington, June 1.

The object of this hearing is to provide a basis for the better enforcement of restrictions under the quarantine and amendments thereto on movement of host fruits and vegetables originating in Florida. The particular object at this time is, by regulation, to prevent any reshipments of such Florida fruits and vegetables from the areas of destination and utilization specified in the quarantine and amendments thereto into other sections of the United States. It is intended also to furnish the basis for prompt handling of any points of infestation which may later be determined in other States.

#### **South Africa to Have Food, Drug and Disinfectant Act**

The Food, Drug and Disinfectant Act has been passed by the South African Parliament and published in the government gazette, according to information received from the American trade commissioner at Johannesburg. It will come into operation on a date to be fixed by the governor general.

Heretofore there was no federal food and drug act in the Union, each province legislating separately. The new act consolidates and amends the laws for regulating the labeling and preventing the importation or sale of food and drugs which are unwholesome or adulterated or incorrectly or falsely described, and for regulating the labeling and preventing the importation or sale of disinfectants which are incorrectly or falsely described.

### **Farm Wages Compare Favorably With Industrial Rates**

A favorable comparison between wages of hired farm hands and industrial wages for comparable work, when allowance is made for the various perquisites such as board, rent, food, etc., received by farm hands in addition to wages, is disclosed in a preliminary report of a survey by the U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics,

In the bureau's survey, 2,117 farm employers reported that the total average farm value of all perquisites was \$30.34 per month, wages \$46.44, or a total of \$76.78. Should the farm value of perquisites, of which food is a large part, be expressed in terms of retail prices, the total of perquisites and cash would compare favorably and in some cases probably exceed wages for comparable labor in industrial employment.

Detailed results of the bureau's survey, made in 1925-26, have been published in a multigraph report entitled "The Perquisites and Wages of Hired Farm Hands," copies of which may be obtained from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C.

### **Swiss Canned Milk Output Higher**

Swiss production of canned milk amounted to approximately 46,200 short tons in 1928, as compared with 40,700 tons for the preceding year, according to the American consulate at Zurich.

### **New York Cannery Consider Standards for Cannery Apples**

United States standards for cannery apples for slicing purposes and United States standards for cannery apples for sauce purposes were considered at a meeting of the Association of New York State Cannery (Inc.), at Rochester, N. Y., May 2, at which R. R. Pailthorp, senior marketing specialist of the division of fruits and vegetables, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, represented the bureau.

The cannery present at the meeting, who handle approximately 85 per cent of the apples used in the State for canning purposes, showed a great deal of interest in the idea of having definite grades for apples used for cannery purposes, according to the Official Record of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. A resolution was passed approving the specifications of the grades, but no action was taken relating to the purchase or inspection of apples.

Several members of the association applied for Federal-State inspection at their canneries this coming fall so that



growers and canners may acquaint themselves with the grades and the operation of the inspection service. The bureau does not expect that many apples in New York State will be purchased on the basis of these United States grades during the coming season, but it hopes that after a season's demonstration many canners and growers will be interested in this method of contracting for apples.

Four canners of apples in Pennsylvania expect to contract with their growers this coming season on the basis of the United States standards and have asked for inspection at their canneries. These canners approved the United States standards at a meeting early this spring.

As the grades and inspection service for cannery apples become better known and understood by growers and canners, the division expects that there will be a demand for the service similar to that which has come about in the tomato cannery industry during the past two years.

#### **Mexico Issues Decree Exempting Fish Products from Taxes**

In order to encourage the domestic fish packing industry, the Mexican Government has issued two decrees exempting fish products from taxes under certain conditions, according to the American commercial attache at Mexico City. One of these decrees, published in the *Diario Oficial* of May 13, 1929, and effective from date of publication, exempts from exploitation taxes fish products handled by packing houses established in Mexico and operating under contracts granted by the Department of Agriculture.

#### **Florida Canned Grapefruit Pack**

At a meeting of the Florida State Canners Association held at Lakeland, the estimated total pack for Florida this season was placed at approximately 850,000 cases of grapefruit and 300,000 cases of juice. It is believed that these figures will be found to be fairly accurate.

In order to check up on this estimate, the Jacksonville Office of the Department of Commerce has written to practically all of the canned grapefruit packers throughout Florida, requesting data on the pack of each individual company.

#### **Bills to Indemnify Fruit Growers Introduced**

Resolutions have been introduced in the Senate by Senator Fletcher (S. J. Res. 47) and in the House by Representative Drane (H. J. Res. 85) to provide compensation to fruit and vegetable growers for losses resulting from efforts to eradi-

cate the Mediterranean fruit fly. These resolutions have been referred to the appropriate committees.

#### **Farming Season Delayed by Freakish Weather**

Farm work this spring has been greatly handicapped by unusual weather conditions, and although this may not result in a short or unproductive season it may cause some shift in crop acreages, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics states in its June 1 report on the agricultural situation.

Winter grain, grass and fruit growth were given an early start by the warm weather during latter March, but this has been followed by two months of unusually cold, rainy weather, which has held up farm work and now leaves the later crops perhaps ten days behind normal schedule.

#### **Weather Conditions**

Following several week of generally unfavorable weather for agriculture, especially for spring crops in the interior valleys, the week ended May 28 was much better, according to the U. S. Weather Bureau. The first part continued cool in the East, which retarded growth of vegetation, but the fair weather generally favored field operations, while the latter part was much warmer. Vegetation responded rapidly to the improved conditions, and good growing weather continued at the close of the week.

In the interior valleys, where the soil had continued discouragingly wet for a long time, less rain, more warmth, and a good deal of sunshine made much better weather for field operations. Delayed spring plantings made rapid advance in many sections, though some lowlands continued too wet, while the rather general rains near the close of the period again interfered. In the upper Mississippi Valley temperatures were above normal for the first week in seven. The cool weather the first part of the week brought locally damaging frosts to a few extreme northern sections.

In the South conditions were irregular and largely unfavorable. The first part of the week was too cool for good growth in the Southeast, but favorable for work, while the latter part was warm and showery, favoring growth, but interrupting work. In the Gulf area, especially in most of Texas, the cool, wet weather was unfavorable in delaying field operations and retarding growth, especially of warm-weather crops.

In the Great Plains States conditions were generally favorable, especially in the north where moderate to high temperatures

and mostly fair weather prevailed, with beneficial showers near the close of the week. Rains were also helpful in parts of the far Southwest, but moisture is becoming increasingly needful in the interior of the Pacific Northwest, while late grains and pastures need rain in California and much of the Great Basin.

#### Shipment of Cuban and Bermuda Vegetables

Exports of Bermuda vegetables to the United States during the first half of May amounted to 1,385,612 pounds, celery accounting for 1,052,358 pounds and potatoes 783,023 pounds. For the season to May 15 Bermuda vegetable shipments to the United States have totaled about 8,000,000 pounds, or about 3,775,000 less than during the corresponding period of last year.

Exports of Cuban vegetables to the United States during the first half of May totaled only 504,000 pounds, as compared with 1,387,000 pounds during the first half of May last year. So far this season the exports from Cuba to the United States have totaled 36,963,000 pounds, which is about 4,700,800 pounds more than during the corresponding period last year.

#### Attitude of Food Law Officials on "Health Foods"

The American public should beware of "health foods," "life grains," and other food products for which makers claim curative of health-giving properties, say officials of the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The administration believes the use of the word "health" in connection with foods constitutes a misbranding under the food and drugs act. "The use of this word implies," says W. G. Campbell, chief of the administration, "that these products have health-giving or curative properties, when, in general, they merely possess some of the nutritive qualities to be expected in any wholesome food product."

"The label claims on these products," he says. "are such that the consumer is led to believe that our ordinary diet is sorely deficient in such vital substances as vitamins and minerals, and that these so-called 'health foods' are absolutely necessary to conserve life and health.

"In the enforcement of the Food and Drugs Act, it is necessary to warn manufacturers of these products to have their labels conform to the facts of medical science and actual laboratory tests. The Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration does not object to calling these products 'wholesome,' provided they are wholesome, but the effort to give the impression that

we all need something added to our everyday diet if we are to avoid nutritional disaster is a misrepresentation which the food law enforcing authorities aim to combat.

"So-called 'health-giving' biscuits, foods, and waters are not only a waste of money if purchased for their curative properties but are responsible for a more serious loss because their use is relied upon as a substitute for appropriate corrective measures, as a proper diet, exercise and sunshine."

Of the "health foods" which have flooded the market in past years, there are generally three recognized classes, according to the administration. The first of these includes whole wheat, rye, oats, bran, and mixtures of these. "Valuable as these grain products are to the diet," says Mr. Campbell, "they are misrepresented when curative properties are claimed for them and when the maker says they provide 'life-giving vitamins in their tasty natural state.' The tendency to exaggerate the merits of cereal breakfast foods and 'health food' has received the increasing attention of the administration in an effort to keep statements regarding them in strict conformity with fact. Indiscriminate use of the word 'vitamins' in labeling may be impressive but it must be proved that vitamins are in the product if the manufacturer is to avoid a charge of misbranding.

The second group includes mineral waters the merits of which are frequently exaggerated. The third general group of so-called 'life-giving' products includes candy containing calcium, salt containing iodine, food materials with phosphates added, bread containing carrot flour, crackers containing senna, a laxative drug, and chewing gum containing phenolphthalein, a coal tar cathartic..

During the past few months the administration has been giving attention to the merits of the newly introduced irradiated food products which, it is claimed, give the anti-rachitic vitamin D to the diet. Certain products when exposed to ultraviolet rays, say the food and drug officials, become activated, developing anti-rachitic properties. But they say, ordinary sunshine is rich in ultraviolet rays, and provides vitamin D in abundance. The use of a drugged food, therefor, is needless to persons getting plenty of sunshine, the administration holds.

In its efforts to protect the consumer and the honest manufacturer, who sometimes unknowingly misrepresents his products, the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration rarely resorts to more than advisory measures in correcting many of the exaggerated claims made for so-called "health foods" and similar preparations.